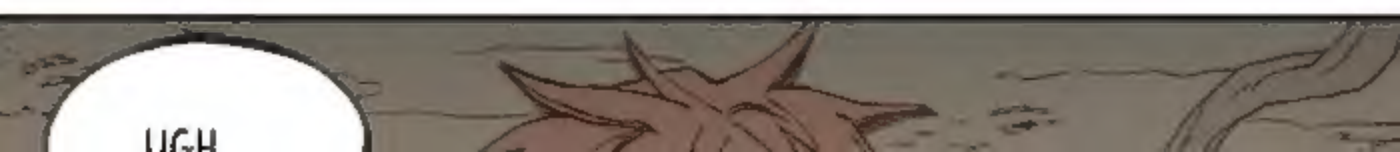
How to become a Dragon

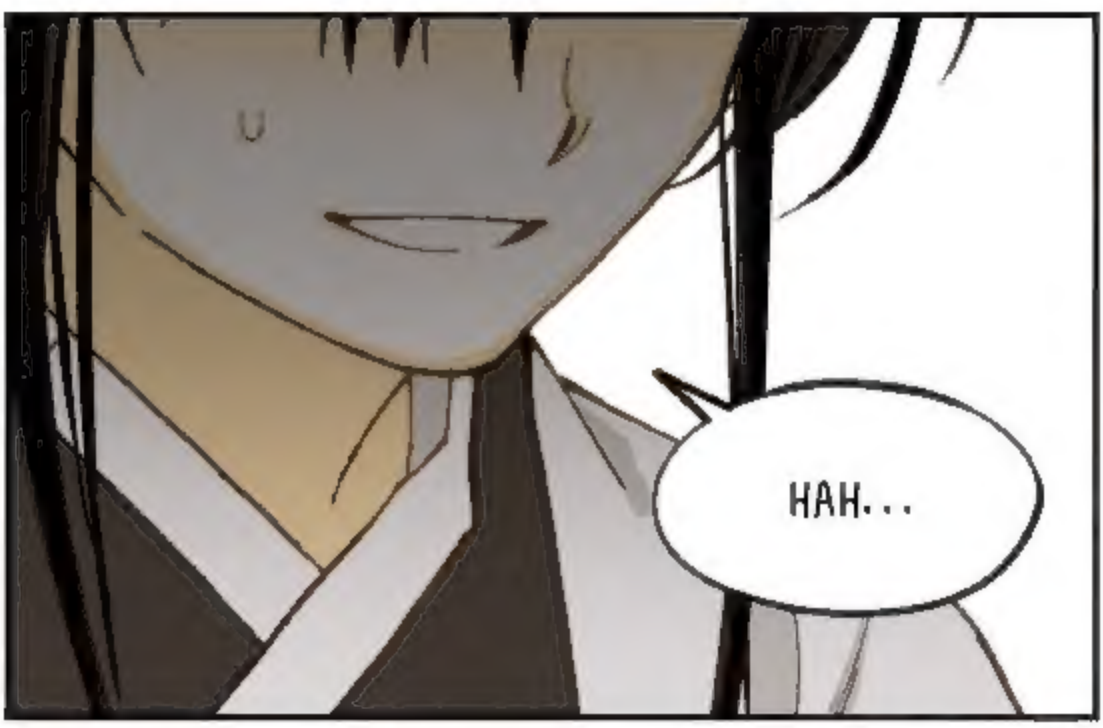
- EPISODE 156 -

GULP


UGH

THAT SCRATCHED MY THROAT GOING DOWN.

DID...
DID YOU EAT IT...?


HAH...

I BELIEVED YOU TO BE CLEVER...
!

SLITHER
...BUT PERHAPS I WAS MISTAKEN.

FWOOSH
CHOKE

I PULLED OUT THAT PIECE FROM DEEP WITHIN THE EARTH.
DO YOU THINK I'D BE UNABLE TO REMOVE IT FROM YOUR FEEBLE FLESH?

LORD YISHIMI!
STOP IT!
...!
...!
DO NOT WORRY. I DO NOT INTEND TO HURT HIM BY CUTTING HIM UP WHILE HE IS STILL ALIVE.

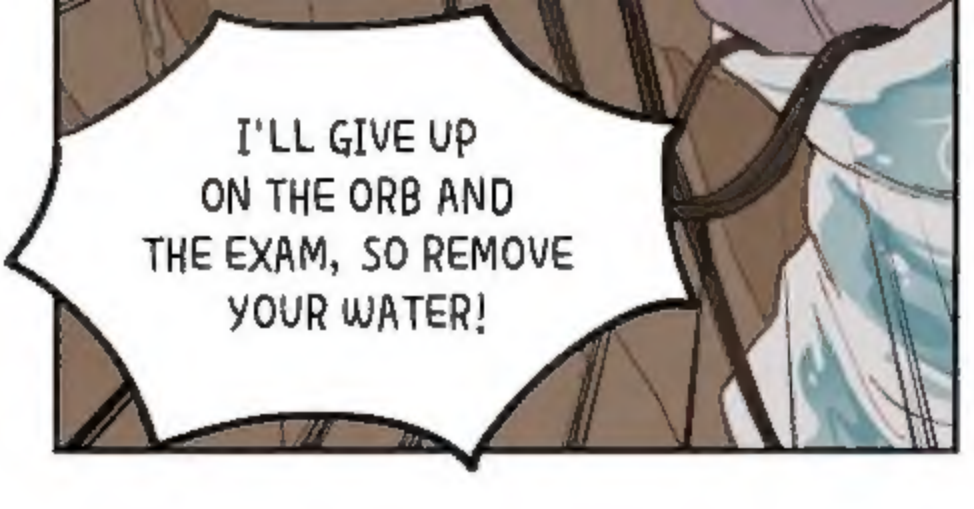
15 MINUTES SHOULD BE ENOUGH TIME FOR HIM TO DIE.
!!

I WILL WAIT FOR A MOMENT.

WHY ARE YOU GOING THIS FAR...?
GURGLE
NO MATTER HOW IMPORTANT THE EXAM IS, IT CANNOT BE AS IMPORTANT AS SOMEONE'S LIFE!

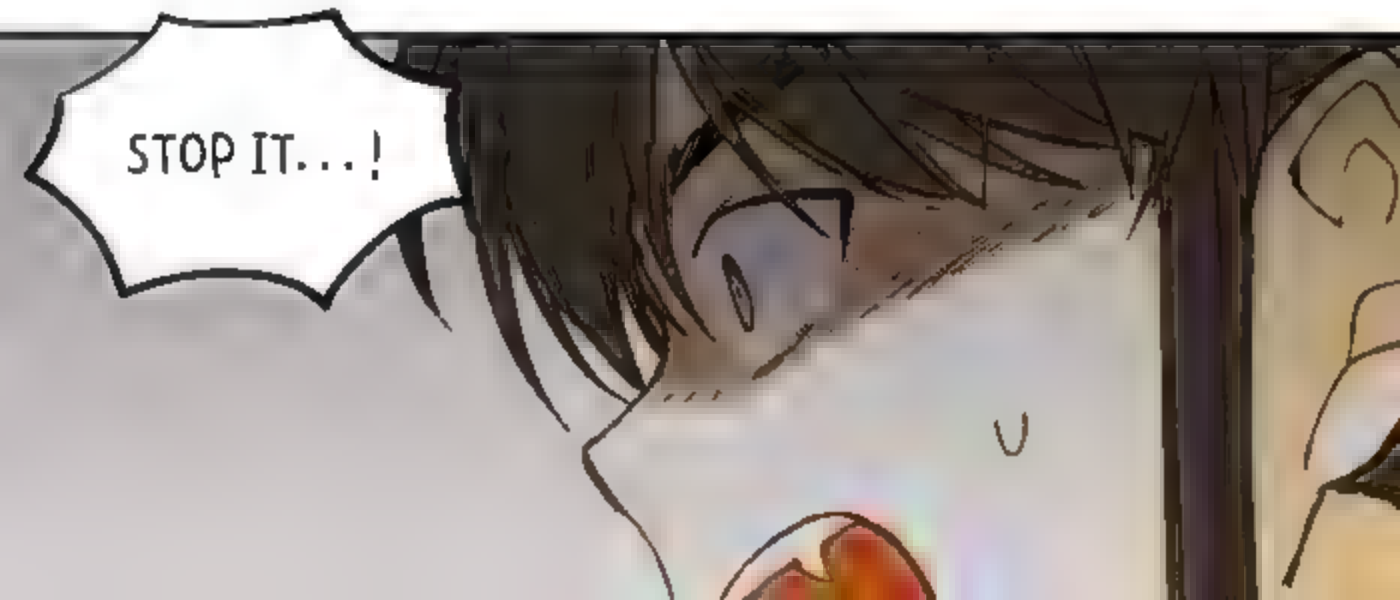
...
BUT ISN'T IT?
THIS EXAM MATTERS MORE TO ME THAN A LIFE DOES.

FORGET IT!


I'LL GIVE UP ON THE ORB AND THE EXAM, SO REMOVE YOUR WATER!

HOW EASILY YOU SPEAK OF GIVING UP.
SHAKE
SHAKE
YET IT SEEMS THAT THE BOY HAS DIFFERENT THOUGHTS.
HE MUST BE FEELING JUST FINE.

AH, WAS IT ALL AN ACT?
SLAP
...
HOW STUBBORN HE IS, CONSIDERING HE WILL DIE SOON...


STOP IT...!

I SAID
I'D GIVE UP!
LET'S
SEE...
IT'S BEEN
QUITE A WHILE SINCE
HE SWALLOWED
IT...
MAYBE
IT'S AROUND
HERE NOW?
SLIDE

SMASH

TURN

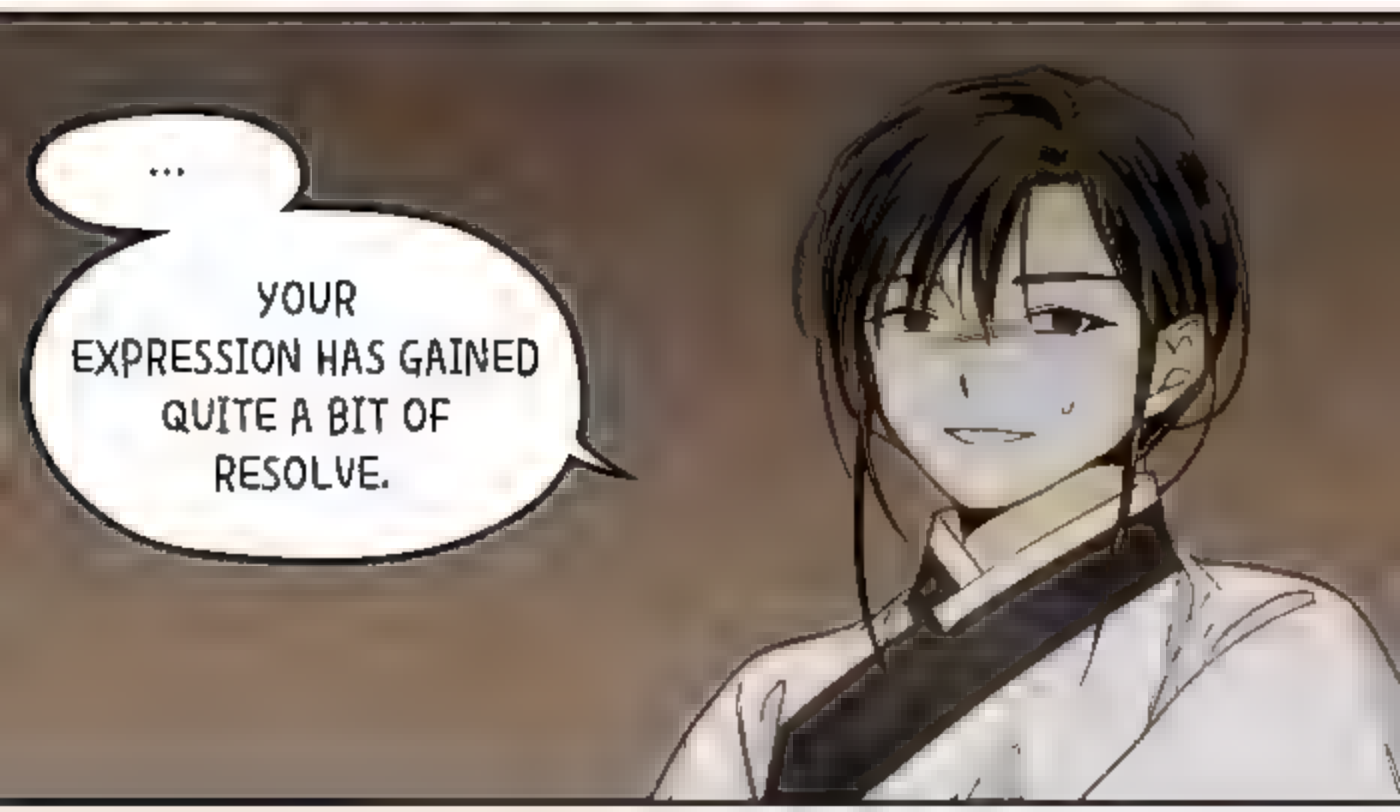
FWOOM

CRASH
UGH...

TWINKLE
...!

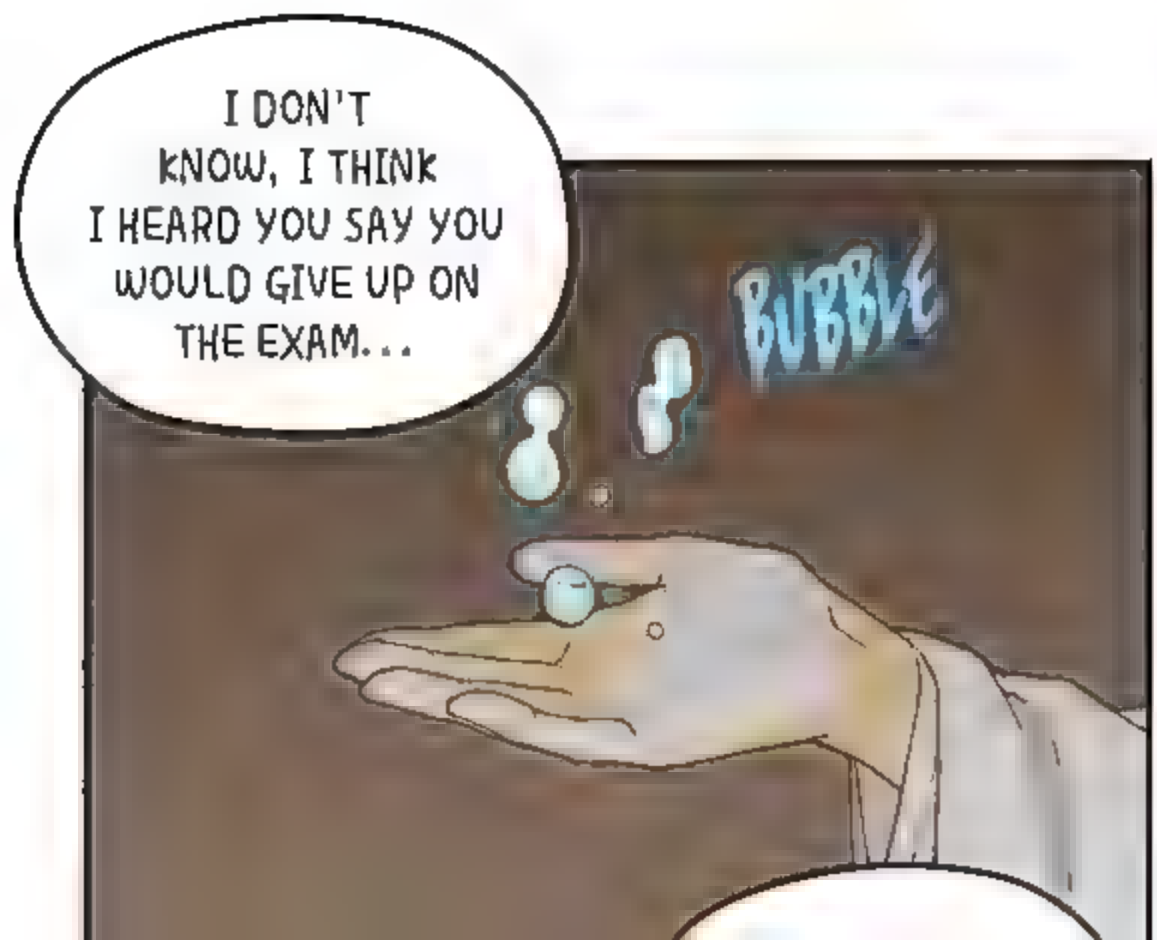
SPLASH
BUAH !

RUMBLE
COUGH...
GASP...


...
YOUR EXPRESSION HAS GAINED QUITE A BIT OF RESOLVE.

I TOLD YOU...

...TO STOP.


I DON'T KNOW, I THINK I HEARD YOU SAY YOU WOULD GIVE UP ON THE EXAM...
BUBBLE

...BUT WOULD YOU REALLY STEP AWAY FROM IT SO EASILY?

BUBBLE
YOU'VE BECOME MORE ARROGANT, TOO.

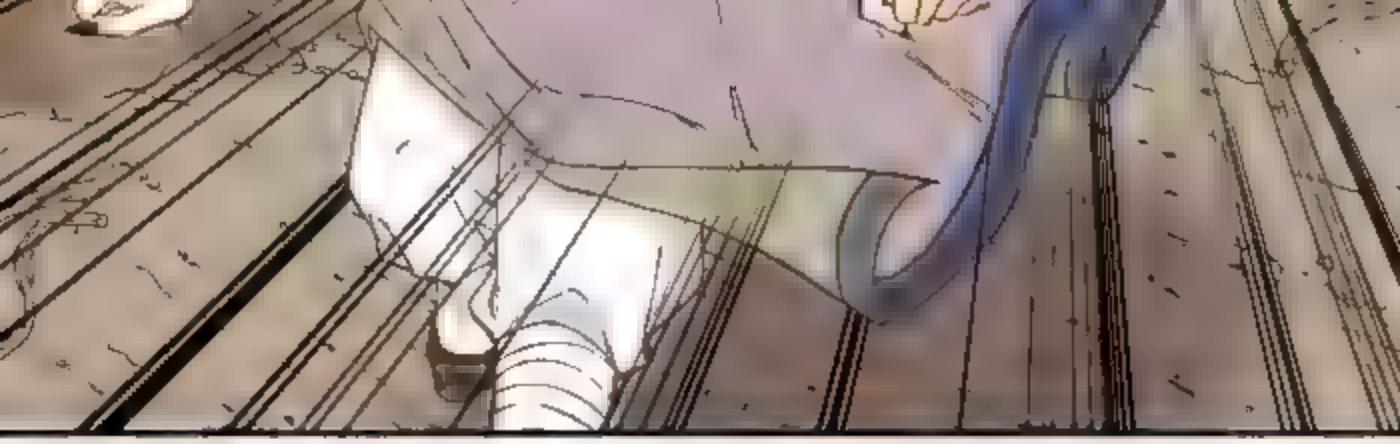
FREEZE
YOU AREN'T REALLY THINKING OF FIGHTING AGAINST ME...

CRRACK
...ARE YOU?

WHOOSH

LEAP

SMASH



BANG!
BANG!
BANG!
BANG!
BANG!

THERE IS NO WATER, RAIN, OR CLOUDS IN THIS PIT.
WHAT COULD YOU POSSIBLY DO?

FIRST...

FWSHHHH

HE...
COUGH
...DISAPPEARED?

...
SIGH
EVEN YOUR ATTEMPT AT HIDING YOUR PRESENCE...
...IS PATHETIC.
GRAB

TREMBLE
THIS IS THE ONLY ATTACK...
...THAT YOU CAN MANAGE TO DO.

UGH...
CLENCH

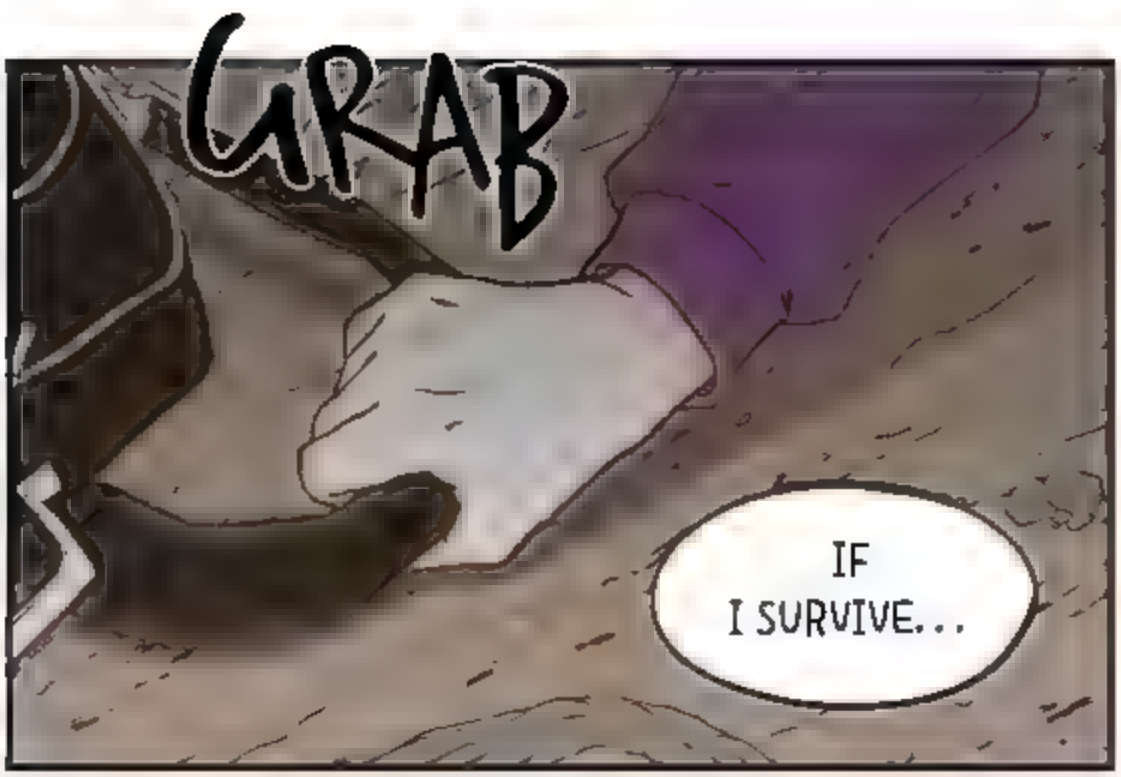
PIERCE

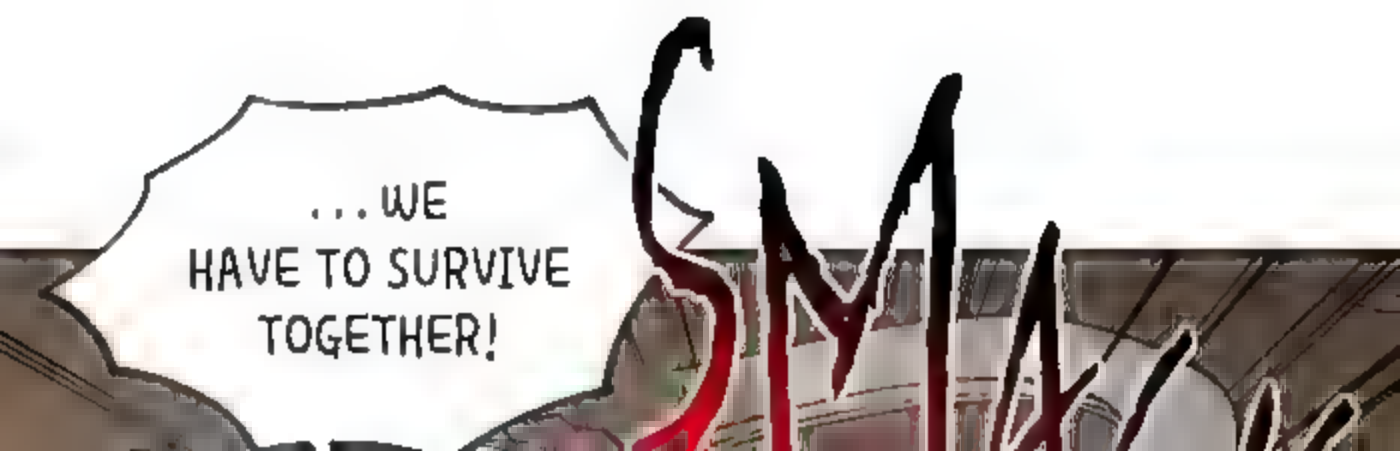
AAAH!
DO YOU REALLY THINK...
...YOU COULD FACE ME?

BARI...!
STUMBLE
AAH...

NOD
...

WAIT, WHAT...?
WHAT GOOD WOULD IT BE FOR ME TO ESCAPE ON MY OWN?


GRAB
IF
I SURVIVE...

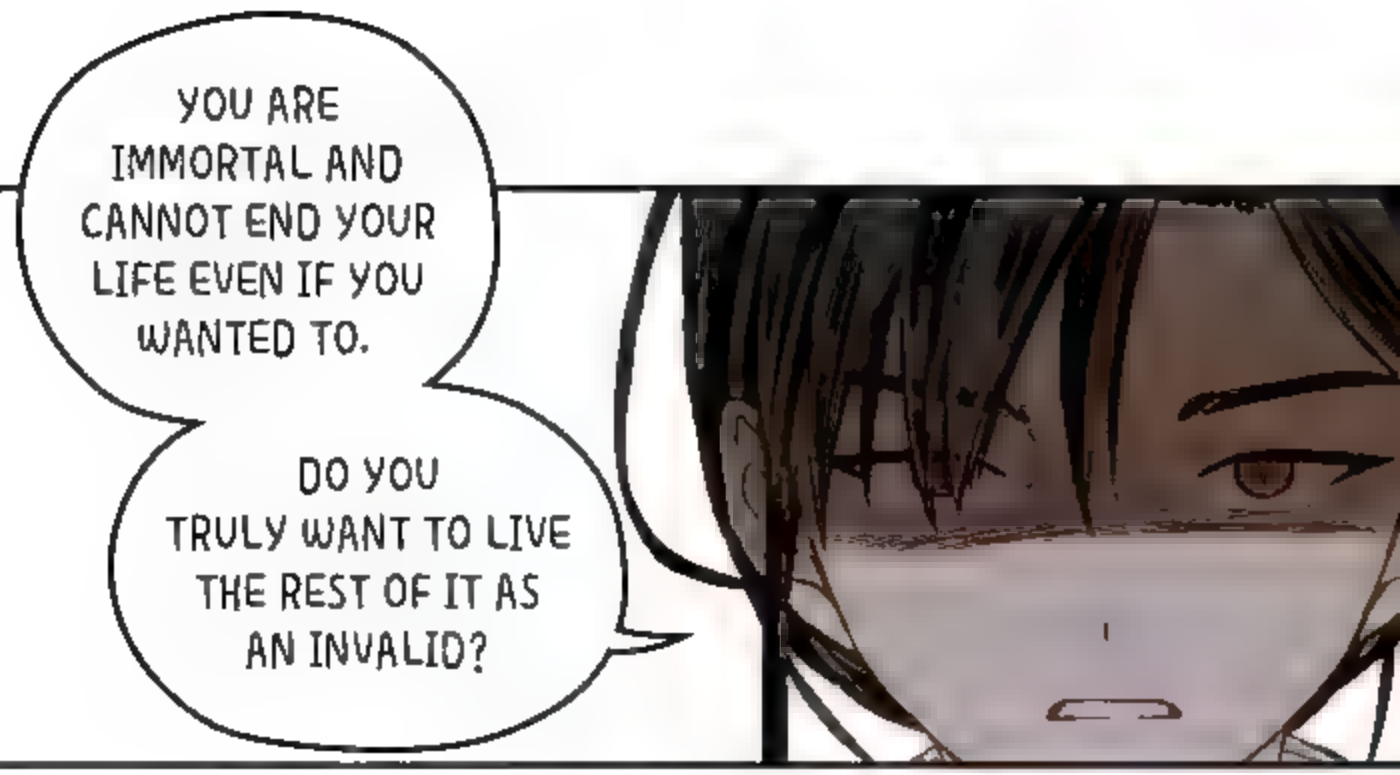

...WE
HAVE TO SURVIVE
TOGETHER!

...
...
BA-BUMP
BA-BUMP
...

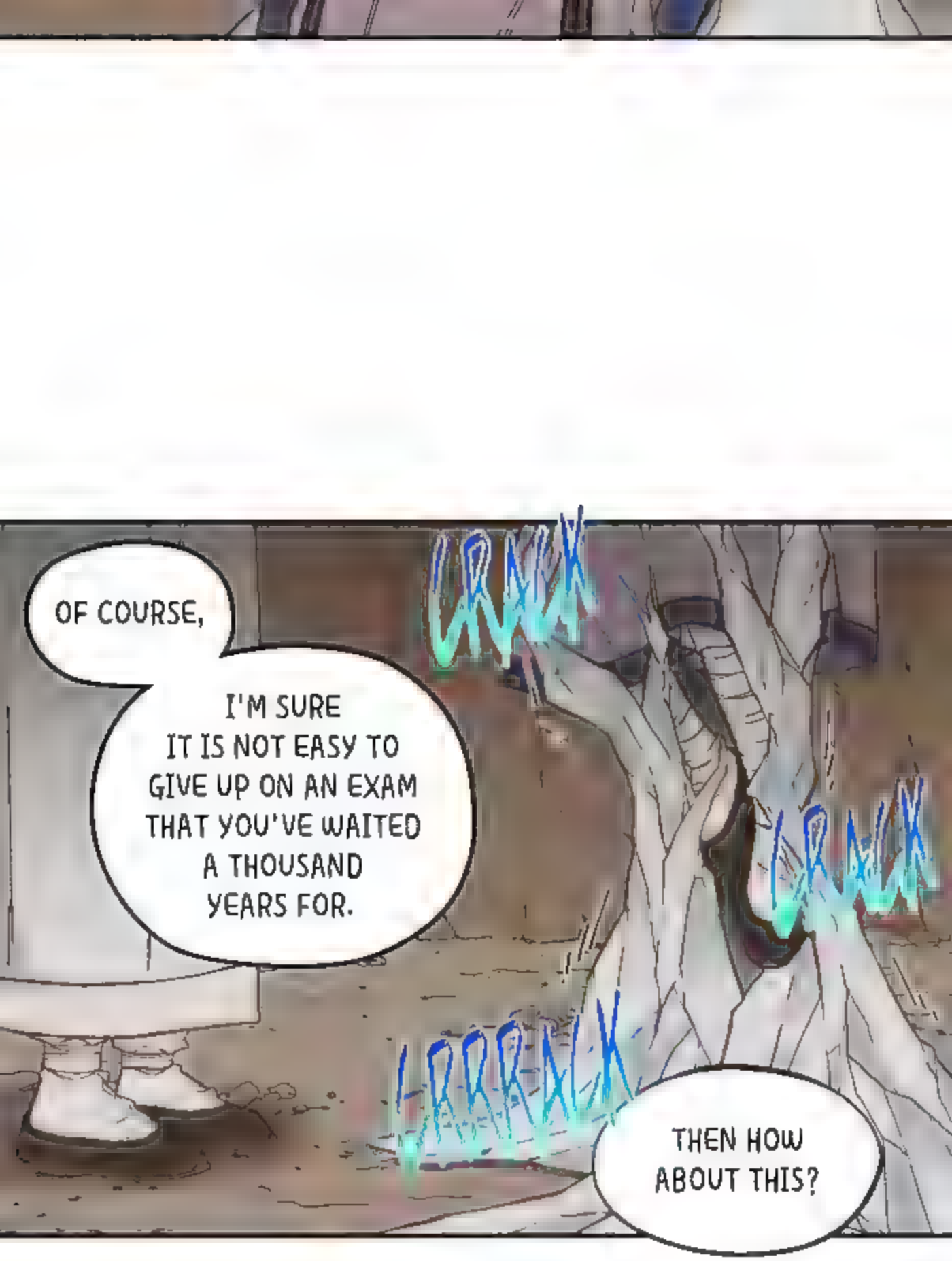
SIGH...
WHAT A NUISANCE.

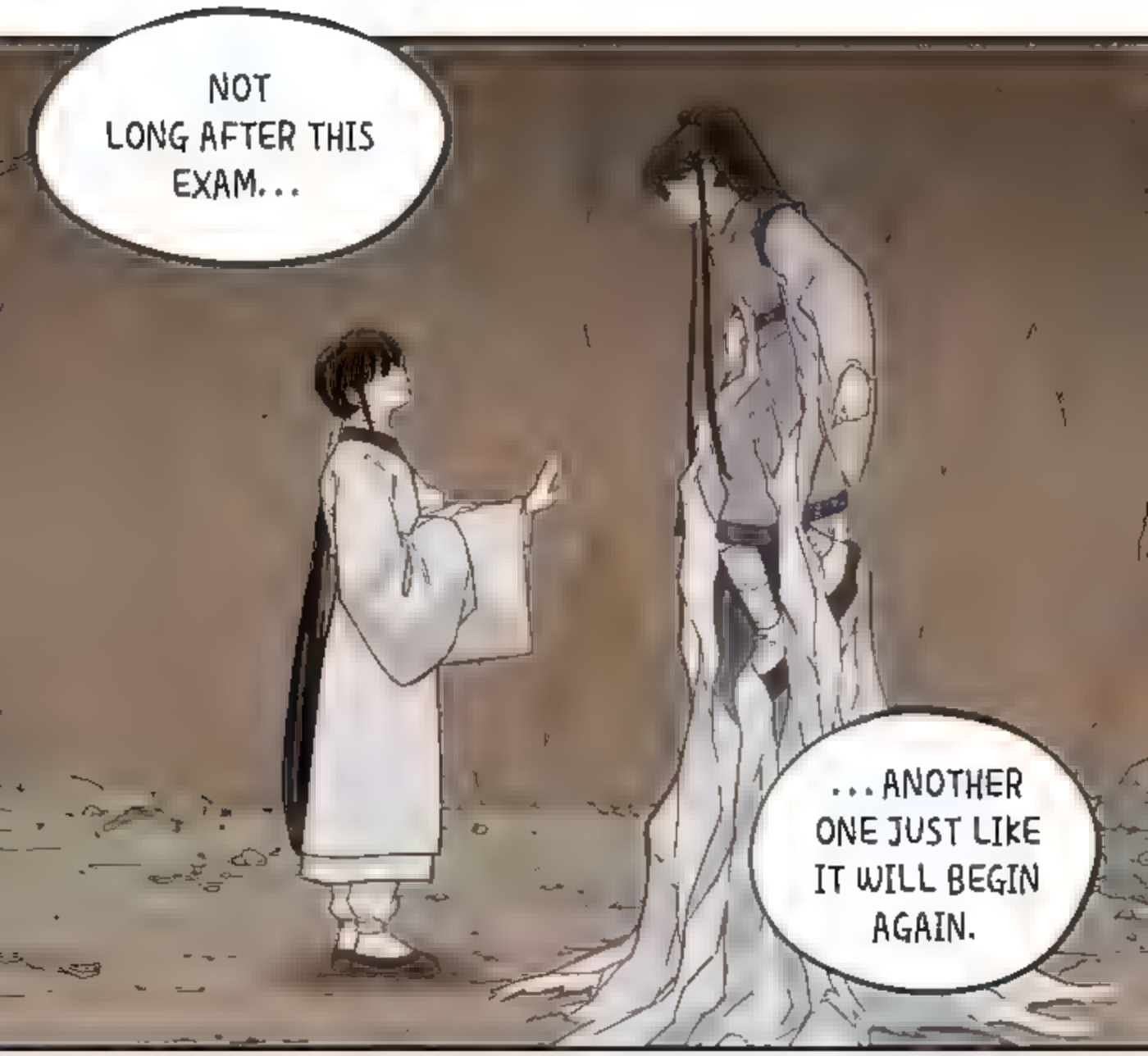
YOU MUST KNOW THESE THINGS ALREADY, BARI.
ARRRW

YOU HAVE NO CHANCE...
...I CAN TAKE THAT HUMAN'S LIFE IN AN INSTANT...
CRACK
CRACK
...AND IF THIS CONTINUES, YOUR LIMBS WILL FREEZE OFF.


YOU ARE IMMORTAL AND CANNOT END YOUR LIFE EVEN IF YOU WANTED TO.
DO YOU TRULY WANT TO LIVE THE REST OF IT AS AN INVALID?

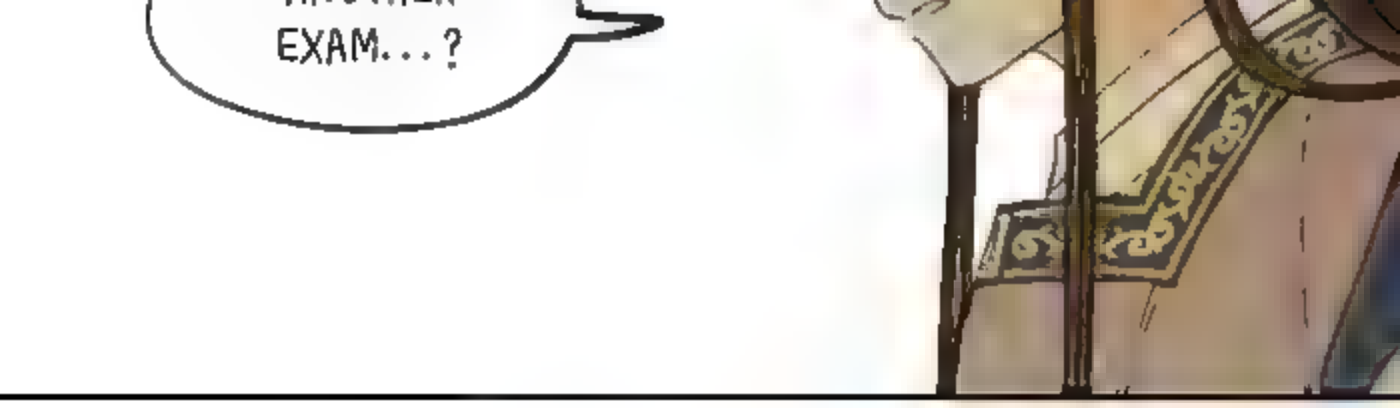
...


OF COURSE,
I'M SURE IT IS NOT EASY TO GIVE UP ON AN EXAM THAT YOU'VE WAITED A THOUSAND YEARS FOR.
CRACK
CRACK
CRRRRACK
THEN HOW ABOUT THIS?


NOT LONG AFTER THIS EXAM...
...ANOTHER ONE JUST LIKE IT WILL BEGIN AGAIN.

WHAT...?
ANOTHER

EXAM...?

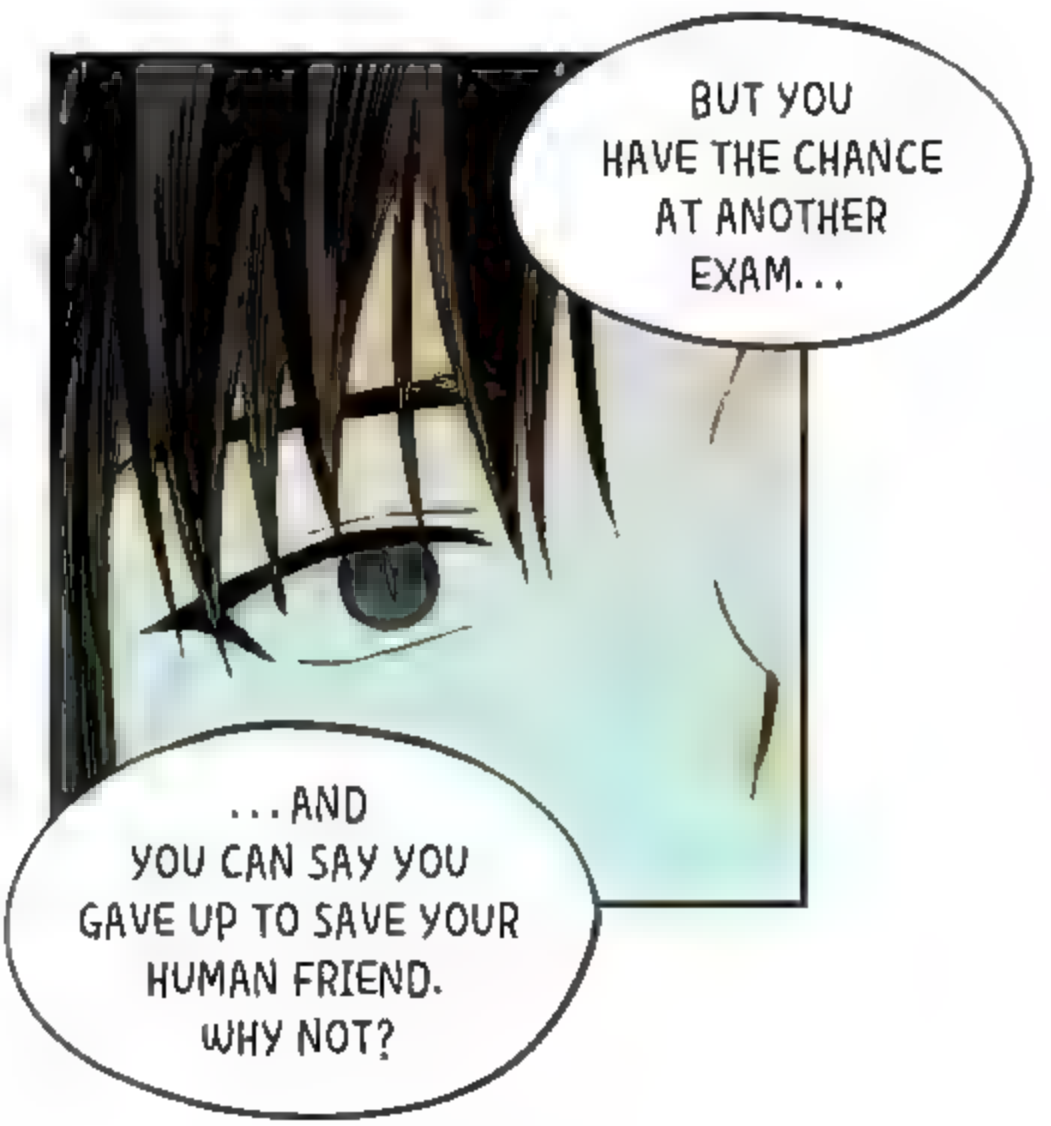


SO WHY DON'T YOU JUST PREPARE FOR THAT OPPORTUNITY...
...AND GIVE THIS ONE TO ME.

W-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
ARE YOU SAYING ANOTHER RIVER IS GOING TO BE DRAGONLESS?
WHICH ONE...?

AND ANYWAYS,

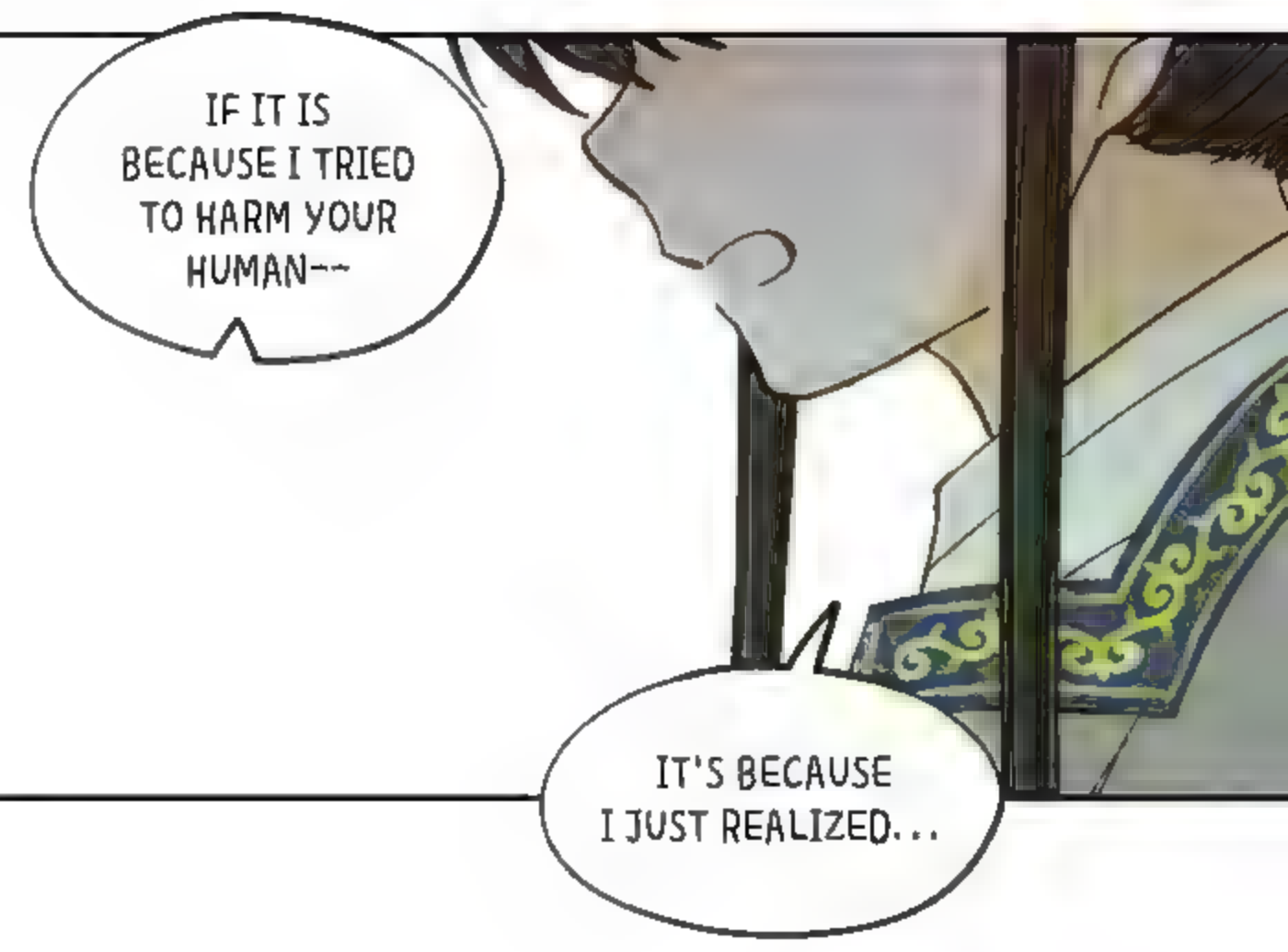
THIS WON'T BE THE FIRST TIME...
...THAT YOU'VE GIVEN YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO SOMEONE ELSE.
NO.
I DON'T WANT TO.

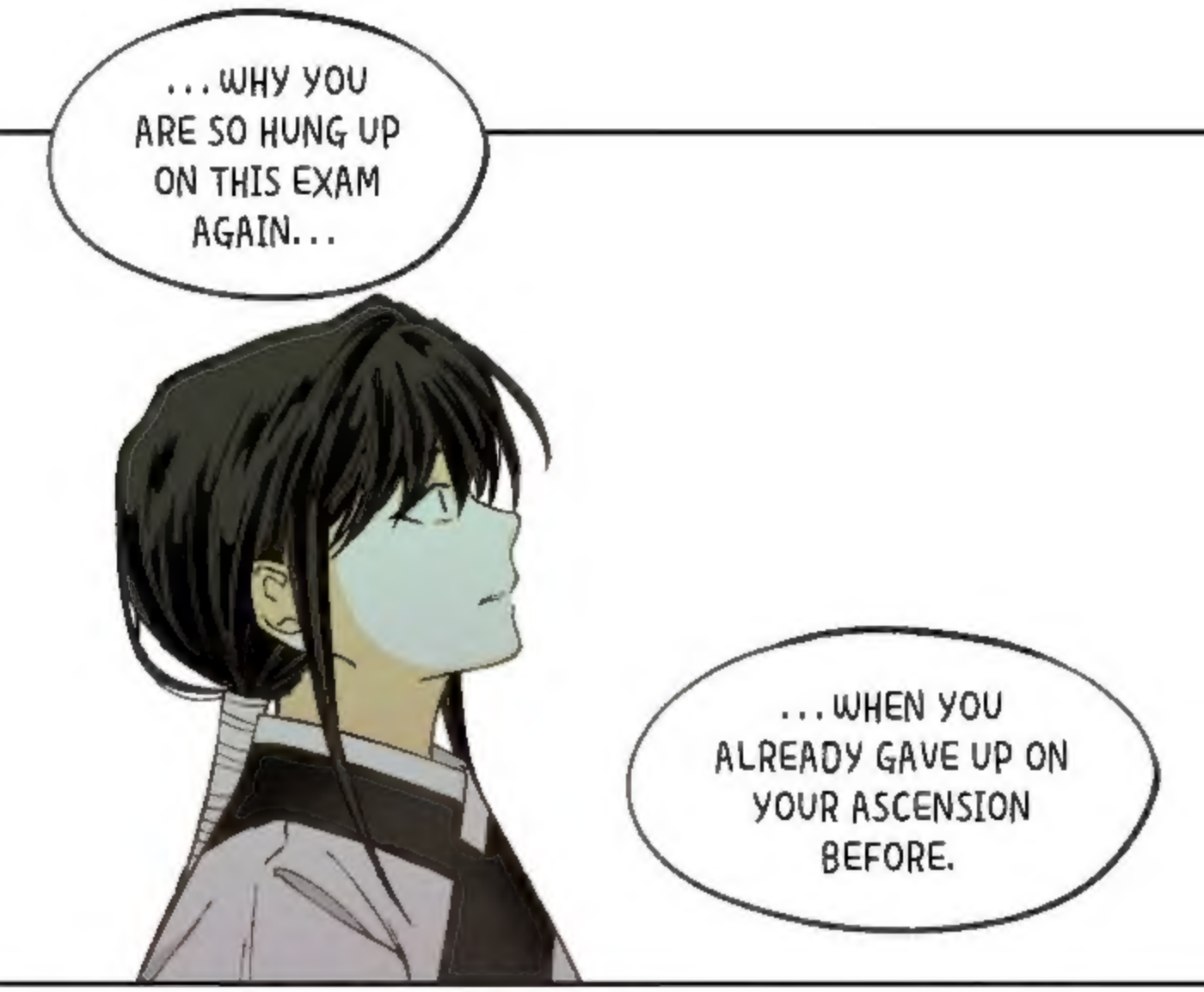

BUT YOU HAVE THE CHANCE AT ANOTHER EXAM...
...AND YOU CAN SAY YOU GAVE UP TO SAVE YOUR HUMAN FRIEND. WHY NOT?

YOU EMPATHIZE WITH EVERYONE IN THE WORLD...

...EVEN THOSE WHO HAVE BETRAYED YOU.
WHY ARE YOU ONLY SO CONTRARY...

...WHEN IT COMES TO MY REQUESTS?


IF IT IS BECAUSE I TRIED TO HARM YOUR HUMAN--
IT'S BECAUSE I JUST REALIZED...


...WHY YOU ARE SO HUNG UP ON THIS EXAM AGAIN...
...WHEN YOU ALREADY GAVE UP ON YOUR ASCENSION BEFORE.

EVEN IF I FULFILL THE WISHES...

LRRRACK
...OF EVERYONE IN THE WORLD...
...I CANNOT FULFILL THE WISH...
...OF SOMEONE WHO IS TRYING TO END HIS OWN LIFE.

YOUR GOAL IS NOT...
...TO BECOME A DRAGON.

YOU
WANT TO BECOME
A DRAGON...
...AND DIE.